

72-3452

16 June 1972

STATINTL

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT: Comments on the National War College,
1971-1972 Academic Year

1. Introduction: I was one of two DDP students at the National War College (NWC) [REDACTED] I had requested to be sent to the NWC principally because I wanted to obtain a more profound understanding of our military and the way it works, and secondarily because I wanted to improve my overall intellectual background with particular emphasis on the Soviet Union and its European/Asian interests.

2. Value of Course: In this section I will emphasize negative reactions to the course because in previous evaluations the positive side, in my view, has been exaggerated. My overall conclusion was that the course was beneficial, hence my negative comments must be placed in this perspective. These criticisms have been given directly to the staff of the NWC framed in suitable polite language. In this internal document, I'll be more direct.

3. The course curriculum has become ritualized into a daily system which has often become redundant and unchallenging. For instance, the discussion periods degenerate frequently into exchanges of subjective opinion without factual back-up and without suitable direction from the faculty present. The NWC ambience is not conducive to genuine intellectual exchange and the barracks technique of mob psychology often takes over the forum. The course needs to adopt more stimulating and professional techniques for student participation such as debate, critique and more intensive and well thought out political and military simulations. The standards have dropped in part

because the faculty is by and large mediocre, particularly the military component. This is compounded by what I believe to be a second-rate contribution from academia. On the other hand, our own representation on the faculty has been excellent. - which should be a source of pride to us.

4. Meeting and cultivating one's colleagues in other components of the United States Government is no doubt important, but has been overemphasized. In the past it has often been used as a weak rationalization for falling standards of excellence. There is no doubt that the NWC has as students some extraordinary military officers and locating them among the mass and exchanging views with these men was a valuable experience. They were unfortunately at times muted by others of their less talented colleagues who represented the more undesirable aspects of the military man. The faculty did little to control this situation.

5. Intelligence problems are not well understood at the NWC. (The NWC simplistically explains the use of intelligence by a "monopoly" type game in which intelligence is purchased.) A briefing such as is provided on the structure and functions of the intelligence establishment tends to be bureaucratic and superficial. In summary, the use of intelligence on the national scene and by theater commanders and embassies is not adequately dealt with.

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7. Recommendations:

- a. Careful consideration of the pluses and minuses should be made before sending a DDP officer

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in a sensitive status to the National War College. Perhaps the DDP input should be limited to one officer who is relatively well known and also well qualified.

b. CIA initiate discussions with the NWC on improving the education of the students on the importance, limitations and use of intelligence.

c. CIA cooperate with the NWC in sending its best officers to participate in geographical area briefings for students and also participate actively in war games and strategic problems designed by the NWC.

d. CIA provide the NWC such classified information as necessary to make the study of strategic problems worthwhile and realistic (in this context CIA's role in Laos is profoundly misunderstood by almost all of the military officers in this class and by the faculty as well). I tried to correct some of the more flagrant misunderstandings but I believe it preferable that part of the overall curriculum be devoted to understanding these complex and subtle problems of American commitment.

8. George Washington University Program: I participated in this program and am glad I did so. It unquestionably distracts from the NWC course but provides a discipline in reading and research and in student participation not otherwise emphasized in the course. The importance of the GWU program could be diminished by a more comprehensive and challenging NWC curriculum. Until this is done, I would recommend the GWU program to those not already possessing an advanced degree.

9. Summary: I reiterate that it was a privilege and honor to be sent to the National War College. There is much that is good in the course. The faculty is already engaged in a program to improve the curriculum and the Board of Consultants is aware of the need for change. The NWC does currently accept the view that the individual student should be allowed to indulge his own interests during that rare year of separation from the rigors of an active career. I tend to believe rather

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that the course should be more dynamic and should be aimed toward transmitting significant experience and to training future executives of the United States Government. Anything less than this would not keep pace with the times.

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